

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 23. (Cancelled)

24. (New) Apparatus for slitting and merging ribbons from a preprinted paper web so that the ribbons can be superposed one on top of the other and synchronized to one another for simultaneous severing at the single cutting station, said apparatus comprising:

- a. a slitting station where the paper web is slit into at least first and second ribbons,
- b. a turnbar roller for the first of said at least two ribbons, said turnbar roller angled to the downstream direction, and having said first ribbon wrapped around a substantial portion of the periphery of said turnbar roller, whereby the first and second ribbons are superposed one above the other directly downstream of said slitting station,
- c. a ribbon drive station where rollers provide the tension required in said ribbons to draw the web and slit first and second ribbons in the same downstream direction,
- d. a single cutting station where the super posed first and second ribbons are simultaneously cut, and
- e. a take up roller so arranged as to substantially duplicate the path length of the second ribbon relative to the first.

25. (New) The apparatus according to claim 24 wherein said drive station rollers associated with said ribbons comprise a master roller driven at a predetermined speed and associated with said first ribbon, and a slave roller driven at a predetermined speed equal to or greater than that of said master roller and associated with said second ribbon, said slave roller acting on said second ribbon for providing sufficient tension to advance said second ribbon around said take up rollers.

26. (New) The apparatus according to claim 24 further characterized by an additional turnbar roller smaller in diameter than the first turnbar roller and associated with a third ribbon created at said slitting station, and take up rollers associated with said third ribbon for substantially duplicating the path length of the third ribbon relative to the first and second ribbons.

27 (New) The apparatus according to claim 24 wherein said turnbar roller includes means for gripping the ribbon wrapped around its periphery so as to prevent slipping of the ribbon axially relative to the turnbar roller.

28. (New) The apparatus according to claim 27 wherein said means comprises a source of negative pressure or vacuum created inside said turnbar roller, and opening provided in a portion of the periphery of said turnbar roller.